

A
S E R M O N ²
OCCASIONED BY THE
GENERAL DISTRESS
OF THE
PARISH OF MARY-LE-BONE,
ON THE
IMPROVIDENT ACCOMMODATION
OF THE
POOR INHABITANTS,
FOR THE
PURPOSE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP,
PREACHED
IN BENTINCK CHAPEL,
On SUNDAY, the 21st of OCTOBER, 1781,

By ISAAC HUNT, M. A. K

In order to encrease the Fund for the Support of that
Place, which had been for some time on the Decline,
through the above mentioned evil.

L O N D O N.

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MEMORIAL

OF THE
GENERAL DISTRESS
OF THE
PARISH OF MARYLEBONE
ON THE
IMPROVING ACCOMMODATION
OF THE
POOR INHABITANTS
FOR THE
PURPOSE OF PUBLIC WORKS
TEACHING
IN BENTLEY CHAPEL
CHURCH, MARYLEBONE, 1844



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A
S E R M O N, &c.

MATTHEW 6. 11.

Give us this day our daily bread.

S AVIOUR of the world, such was thy divine lesson to ignorance and want! Not the solitary prayer of the churl; but the comprehensive wish of charity itself. How wisely, blessed Jesus, dost thou direct our attention to the necessities of our fellow creatures, in the very moment, we are earnestly solicitous for our own! Wrapt up in sordidness, man feels not for the distresses of his kind, but only by those grievances,
B that

that press upon himself; yet, as he has this never failing criterion to determine on the evils, that claim his beneficence, he will, therefore, stand excuseless, in the sight of his Creator, for the negligence of a duty, interwoven in his frame.

But it is not in the *heart alone*, that God has stamped the precepts of affection. The whole tenor of his gospel displays it to our sight. And that nothing might be wanting to the clearness of *command*, the Almighty has *himself* set before us *the example*. The Lord of worlds has descended from sublimity of glory, and cloathed himself with earth for a model to mankind. Hear, on this occasion, the expressive language of benevolence:—"Even as I have loved you, so love ye one another." Is there a wound, O God, which thou hast born for our infirmities, but brands us with ingratitude, for our slightest inattention to the sufferings of want? Shall the King of Heaven disrobe himself of majesty and glory,
and

and voluntarily putting on poverty and shame, endure the acutest human miseries for the redemption of his creature; and shall *he*, worm as *he* is, so highly favoured by a being, whom no frailty of his own could stimulate to sympathy, shamelessly refuse compassion to the exigencies of his fellow, of which he cannot be insensible, while he contemplates himself?

Obduracy, thy doom is fixed as it is dreadful. The voice of indignation has irrevocably decreed, that "whosoever turneth away his face from his poor brother, the face of the Lord shall be turned away from him." Who is so abandoned by grace, who is so hardened in wickedness, who is so inebriated by worldly prosperity, as not to tremble at a denunciation of so terrible an import?

To fear God is the beginning of wisdom. With reverence, then, my brethren, let us examine that duty, which is, at once,

so strenuously, and so awfully enjoined us. We will thus the more accurately conform to his pleasure, whose anger is hell, and its duration eternity. Let the words of adoration be the guidance of research. They are as clear, as they are comprehensive. "Give us this day our daily bread." What is it, man of opulence thou prayest for? Thou, who art filled with the abundance of this life?—Plenty greets *thee* with smiles in every corner of thy habitation; Nor is thy eye shocked by indigence, unless thou meet it in the streets. The choicest viands of the globe appear upon thy board, and the inclemency of season is bade defiance by thy cloathing. Tranquillity furnishes thy pillow with its down, and thou risest from thy bed with the vigour of the morn. In the midst of this felicity, son of fortune, dost thou *crave*. And is food too, the object of this earnestness of asking?—It cannot be the bread of earth; for with that, thou art already satiate. It is the food of heaven, therefore, that *thou* seekest;

seekest: Then, by thine own hunger, make an estimate of thy needy fellow creature's.

“It is not by bread alone, that man doth live, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Of what avail is that charity, which respects the frailties of the *body*, if the interests of the *soul*, have not likewise our attention?—Worthless is the morsel, which is given at our gate, if the eye of gratitude be not taught direction to the author of all bounty. What is our humanity, in removing the asperities of this life, if we are negligent in smoothing the road to life eternal?—How earnestly are we exhorted, how strictly are we commanded, how dreadfully are we threatned to minister to want? And how vainly do we fancy we perform the requisition, when we dole out our charity to the sustenance of *earth*? Was this, blessed Jesus, the object of thy mission?—Was it for *this*, the hand of cruelty pressed the thorns on thy head?

Was

Was it for this, the pangs of agony produced thy bloody sweat?—Was it for this thou wert with ignominy nailed upon the cross?—Was it for this, the callous ruffian drove the spear into thy side? Lamb of God! Immortality could alone be an object of miseries so extraordinary, at once, and excruciating as thine!—Immortality! Yes, my beloved, immortality is the legacy our dying Saviour has bequeathed us, *but* a legacy we cannot have, by other means, than what obtained it. Charity, Christians! *procured* the bread of life; charity my brethren must preserve it too.

Let us attend the steps of our benefactor, and we will see charity impressed in them whatever ways he traversed:—In his descent to earth;—in his cloathing himself with flesh;—in his meekness under injuries;—^{*in his preaching:*}—in his fasting in the wilderness;—^{*in his*} ~~in his~~ ^{*watching:*}—^{*in his praying:*}—in his temptation by the devil;—in his anguish in the garden;—in his sufferings on the cross;—~~in his preaching;~~—~~in his watch-~~
ing;—

ing;—~~in his praying~~: Take *but* a *feature* of his *picture*, and what a subject for admiration!—Take the *whole*, and we are lost in gratitude and love.

But is goodness of *such purity* expected from mankind? No, no, my brethren. Our divine ruler doth not so severely exact, from the inequality of his subjects. No *more* doth *he* require from us, than we have capacity to *perform*. Nay *ourselves* are made the judges of the tax he imposes. We are commanded to deal by others, but as we wish they, in like case, should minister to us.—With what appetite, churlish glutton, can you sit down to feasting, and see *famine* at your window raging for a *crumb*!—Christians! mark me well! The God of heaven will not be mocked. In vain are all your prayers, in vain are all your tears, vain is all attention to the externals of religion, if ~~we~~^{we} treat not others with beneficence, when we pine for it ourselves.

Come

Come hither, calculation, with thy pen! and I will shew thee, though usury be thy guide, that charity gives an interest would beggar prodigality, and tire avarice itself in the happiness of hoarding. Cheerfully lend thy mite, cautious niggard, to the poor, and give a loose to appetite in return for thy loan!—Will an hundred fold appease thee? Thou noddest discontent.—Take thousands, then, and thousands superadded, and if *still* thou art dissatisfied, let numeration be exhausted, by the greediness of wish! Let Methuselah's be *your* years, and *counting* be *their* business, charity is still offering, and makes her premium bear the character of immensity at last; and to secure you your possession, she stamps her seal of life. This earth,—yon sun,—the firmament itself will be enwrapt with flames. Yet still the deed of charity endures the conflagration; and bears your title unimpeached to the judgement seat of God.

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Brethren! Let not the pride of life lead you to deception! It is good for you to enter into the chambers of humiliation; and draw with sober hand, the curtain of dis-ease.—Yonder is the apartment of *dying avarice*.—Heavens! What a scene of horror is present to us *now*. It is a shipwreck among savages. There is not an eye, but darts destruction on the struggler for existence; while *he* sees his treasures sink before him to give bitterness to gall.—Christians! had this man charity, he had not been so lost in the hour of distress. But let us turn from a sight so *shocking* to humanity, to contemplate the moments of the good man's death. He feareth not the loss of worldly possessions; his stores are long laid up, whither himself is *now* ascending. Should we wonder that serenity fits smiling on his brow! Satisfied that this was not the place of his abiding, he carries his credentials to eternity itself. The dried-up tears of widows,—the suppressed cries of orphans,—the fatiated cravings of the hungry,—

gry,—and the blessings of him that raged with the violence of thirst—these, *these* are *his title deeds* to the inheritance of glory, and fill him with resignation to the summons of his God. The departure of this man calls to mind an epitaph, said to be inscribed on the sepulchre of Dionysias^u of Athens. “He hath transferred his wealth to Heaven by his charity, and is gone to take possession.”—* And we too, my brethren, *had* our Dionysias^u.—*Had*———Pardon the weakness of your Preacher! But *is* it an infirmity to weep *his* loss, whose blessing

* While the author was composing this discourse, he received an account of the death of a most valued friend, and obeying the impulse of his feelings on the occasion, he expressed them. He now lets the passage stand, not only as a just tribute of his own grief, but in compliment to the sympathetic tears of a crowded auditory, to whom it was unnecessary to name the loss alluded to, though, perhaps, it may gratify the benevolent stranger to be informed, that the worthy friend thus spoken of, was VINCENT CAMPART, Esq. late of Charlotte-Row, Marylebone, whose memory will ever be regretted, while genuine philanthropy bears value among men.—

sing never dropped without a tear upon the poor.—Humanity!—hadst thou failings, they are buried in the dust.—Thy virtues *gratitude* has written *here*, but charity has graven the catalogue in Heaven.

How supreme is his felicity, who, with Dionysius, truly merits such a tribute to his name!—What to this is all the pageantry of mourning?—its escutcheons,—its fables,—and its plumes. Away you simulacra with your mockery of woe!—Give me the widow's tear, wouldst thou embalm the dead! Let the cries of the fatherless pierce the air for their benefactor; or, whelmed with their grief, let the children of woe stand dumb before his tomb!

But it is not in the hour of dissolution, nor in the triumphs of the grave, that charity exalts us.—It is the staff on which we lean in every weariness of life: Does thy journey fatigue thee, though rolling in thy chariot?—Support *humility* fainting, while

he urges *his* on foot.—Do the pains of *thy disorder* brave the wisdom of the skilful? Stretch thy medicine to him, who is destitute of help!—Is thy *palace* invaded by the tyrant of terrors? Stop the ravages he committeth in the *cot* without defence! Charity! Thou art, indeed, the balm of life! that sympathetic balm, which applied to others grief, never faileth to alleviate the evils on ourselves.

Let us now, my beloved, apply these salutary truths to the occasion, which has principally given rise to my present exhortation!

If alms giving to our fellow creatures for the support of bodily infirmities, and the supply of worldly want. If *temporary* succour to the necessitous be *thus* efficacious in the sight of divine goodness, how much *more* meritorious must *those humane* offices be, which are directed not merely to the relief of transitory distress, but to the
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the *salvation* of that life, whose duration *knows no end*. With what confidence shall we pray to our heavenly Father for *our* daily bread, and refuse the manna of the gospel to our brother, who hath need?—And yet, lamentable my brethren, is the fact, that in one of the most populous and opulent of our parishes, the accommodation of the poor in the places of public worship is utterly neglected. Mary-le-bone hath nothing short of six and thirty thousand souls, yet, of a multitude so numerous not five hundred, from the confined structure of the parish church, can congregate. Thus excluded from the benefits, which the ample endowments of our religion, were intended to dispense, in widest latitude of benevolence, how is it the enormous superfluity remains?—Melancholy is the view! The profligate, whom shame might hold to duty, were they enabled to discharge it, seize eagerly on the plea, which this negligence affords them. *They* tell you, they are desirous of attend-

attending public worship, but they shew you the impossibility from the scantiness of room. Let those, who give such unhappy people this apology for irreligion, search their conscience for reply to the scandal, if they can. It is my part to lament, what I own, I cannot answer.

But there are others of this excluded number, that more immediately claim attention, as they seem anxiously to seek it. It is the poor, I mean, my brethren, the poor, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and, who strain every effort of ability to attain it. It is on them, I am solicitous to fix the eye of your humanity.

As a remedy for the evil, which I have now been exposing to you, Chapels for divine service have been erected in those parishes, which have been so unhappily improvident in the structure of their Churches! But is this a remedy?—Alas! my friends, far from it. Who are they among the clergy,

clergy, that officiate in these Chapels?—Not the beneficed, not the opulent, but the unprovided and the poor: And the consequence is natural.—If the poor pastor, amid all the embarrassments, that entangle the domestic steps of want, still urges his way to fill his sacred office, and feed his hungry flock, is it reasonable he should return to his little shed, without some recompence for his care? Yet *this* is but the smallest claim upon the Chapel. The Architect must have returns for his building, and the owner for the ground, on which it stands. And how are these demands to be discharged?—Why truly by parcelling out for hire the accommodations of the house of God!

And, if a sufficiency to answer these expences will permit the poor neighbourhood a precarious admission into these temples, even this slender good, the avarice of Chapel-mongers destroys. By encreasing the number of these buildings, *they* think they
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are adding to their unworthy wealth, when, in fact, they do nothing but diminish it. Yet if *theirs* were the only loss on this occasion; a good man would rather rejoice at their punishment, than pity their distress. But it is the poor ultimately that suffer by this—what fitter term can I give it, than *Simony itself*. Congregations are split, and the expences have, of course, no fund.—What could scarcely support one Chapel cannot surely, when divided, be adequate to more.—Some must fall, therefore, to decay. In such event, the poor will be the only sufferers, as the rich have the means of indulging their convenience, be distance or expence, as extensive as they may!—

Besides, heavy as the double burden of Church rates and Chapelry are together, it cannot be expected, that the most *generous few* should be able to bear the grievances, which this impious traffic of the Chapel-mongers has laid upon you all.

For

For *my own part*, you are all my witnesses with what pains, I have contributed to the establishment of this place of worship; and with what zeal, I have endeavoured to make it useful to its attendants.—Nor has lucre been the object of my care. *Here*, indeed, it would be vanity to expect it.—My views were loving kindness unallayed. I have, for almost four years, struggled with the embarrassments of an unprovided Clergyman, to remain among a people, whom I tenderly regard.—The pressure of the times, with the superadded grievance, I have just mentioned, fill me with apprehension, lest it prove impossible I should continue my exertions any longer. However, whilst *this fold* can afford shelter, the *shepherd* will not quit his flock: As to my own feelings, on this occasion, if *decency* had not countenanced their appearance, *prudence* would have found it not easy to repress them. All of you I love with the tenderness of a pastor; and to some of you I am bound by gratefullest

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affection of a friend. There is not an instant, that I contemplate the comforts of my little ones, which brings not to my mind those, who blessed them with a roof.—But not on me or my concerns, waste the attention of a moment.—Again and again, let me hold up to your consideration that, which I would have the only object of your care.

It is not merely temporal, but eternal welfare also, that I would commit to the salutary fostering of your hand.

Happy, indeed, would it be, if the opulent of the Clergy would make this application, unnecessary to day; and as God has enabled them to minister without *hire* that *they* would *freely* for such bounty give his gospel to the *poor*. This would be comfortable to the word of life itself. **HO** every one, that thirsteth, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.” But
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this blessed conduct, how desirable soever, we see no reason to expect!—

For the present complaint, some worthy friends, whom I have here the happiness of seeing, have suggested this charity as a temporary relief till the wisdom of government, * or some such permanent assistance

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* There cannot surely be a greater grievance in a civilized state, than the monstrous inequality observable in the distribution of the revenues of the Church. That one or two men may riot in luxury, and wanton on the fat of the land, hundreds employed in the ministry of the gospel, who are not *nominal* labourers in the vineyard of Christ, but incessant in the discharge of their important duties, must shift as they may for a pitiful subsistence. But great as this evil is, it is yet but a small part of an opprobrium, of which no country in Europe furnishes so shameful an instance as our own. A circle of duty is given to one man, which would require the zeal of ten to fulfil with any efficacy; and yet weighty as this task is, instead of dividing it, the lazy principal will throw his burden wholly on the shoulders of a wretched deputy, who for a miserable pittance of perhaps a twentieth of the ample endowment of his haughty employer, drudges through his business, rather to the injury of religion, than the smallest edification. For what avails the recommendation of benevolence, or of equity from the pulpit, to

can be had for the removal of an evil, at once so scandalous, and destructive. If this, my brethren, should fail—but in *such* a case, can I fear success? Is it not the

a congregation, who observe so little of either in the conduct of their pastors, even among themselves. Besides, what notion can a poor man entertain of the honesty of a demand, where no service has been done; and where indeed it is impossible any could have been performed. Such, for instance, is the case of the parish of St. Mary-le-bone. All the parishioners of that extensive circle must satisfy parish dues, and other incidental claims; and yet, not a fortieth part of them do, or can receive from the claimant any manner of benefit to found the equity of his demand on: and Chapels, erected for the purpose of eking out the improvident scantiness of the Church, render this unreasonable conduct the more glaring, inasmuch as the parishioner must, in attending them, pay *twice* for a service he has received *once* only. Nay he has still a greater ill to combat, for some of these Chapels being in the hands of ignorant, griping laymen, they extort on the convenience of the congregation, and as they have the power of shutting up these edifices at their pleasure, they have, at all times, the means of compelling a compliance with their avarice.—Now, if the rich be thus shamefully oppressed, what a melancholy picture may we not form of the distresses of the poor.—

Were, indeed, all these supplementary structures in such hands as the worthy Nobleman's, who owns some of them

the poor, that I am pleading for?—And does not the name of Jesus sanction my petition?

The house of prayer is the dwelling of the Almighty. For though the mind graspes

in this parish, there would be little or no necessity to mention the mischiefs, we are now speaking of: But as matters are at present situated, they call loudly for redress. In truth, taking the whole of these complaints into consideration, we can by no means be astonished at the enormous defection from the established Church, so very remarkable in latter times! Yet great as the evil is, analogy affords us a hint for its destruction. When private property has interfered with the welfare of the public, the legislature has removed the grievance on a compensation to the individual, whose rights it was then under the necessity of invading. Such was lately its conduct in regard to the isle of Man, for the benefit of commerce. And with great humility, it is suggested, a like conduct might be observed for the advantage of religion, in rescuing the concerns of the Church out of those hands, into which they have fallen so improperly: And never surely can there be a period more favourable to a reform of this nature than the present, when the dignities of the church are filled by men, whose genius and learning would add lustre to the most polished æra of the heathen world, while their piety would distinguish them amid the purest virtues of primitive Christianity. From qualifications of such excellence, what aids might not be expected for the completion of a work so devoutly to be wished by every friend to religion, and the dearest interests of mankind.

not the plentitude of his presence; though we fly to highest Heaven, and God be *there*, and plunge to deepest Hell, and he be there also; though the expanse of nature be the Lord's canopy; and the universe be rejoiced at the effulgence of his aspect, yet within these sacred walls he peculiarly loves to shine.

It is *here*, he delights to show the splendors of his treasure; it is *here* he showers the choicest blessings of his grace. When you assemble *here*, my friends, you are the guests of your Creator; and the feast *he* sets before you is the banquet of the saints. It is this feast, that I would entreat you to impart to your poor neighbours, and I call upon your gratitude to comply with my desire. *Here*,—where so often you experience Heaven's bounty; *here*—you are now met, to prove your merit of the gift.—This is not any longer the theatre of plenty.—Indigence sits to day in the mansion of your God,—And see! the Deity himself

self condescends to be your suitors !—Jesus, my dear Christians, is the advocate of want.

God of glory ! what a sight dost thou present to us this moment,—stooping from high Heaven to supplicate from man !—Behold your dying Saviour, bespeaking your attention !—From the cross he addresses you in the ebbing of his life !—What anguish overspreads his face, yet what benevolence beameth from his eye !—His parched tongue scarce gives him, to pour out his whole heart. “ For your sakes, “ finners, I am suffering *all* you see, and “ still to greater do I hasten for your deliverance from the grave ;—from miseries, “ that but to think of, would harrow up “ your souls. But not to *save* you only, do “ I submit to this cross,—I die, sons of “ Adam, *not merely* that you should *live*.— “ I die, that you should stand in *that* presence, which is fullness of joy, and at “ *his* right hand, where there are pleasures
for

“ for evermore,—pleasures, which eye
 “ hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither
 “ hath it entered into the heart of man to
 “ conceive.—Yet from all this happiness I
 “ descended, that through my sacrifice, you
 “ might be admitted to its perfect enjoy-
 “ ment; and for *all this exuberance of affec-*
 “ *tion*, the only return I desire, is,—*that ye*
 “ *love one another!*—Love one another,—
 “ by *this* mangled body, I adjure you:
 “ By *these* bloody wounds, which are
 “ streaming for your sins;—by *this* side,
 “ which is pierced for your iniquities;—by
 “ *these* members transfixed for your sensua-
 “ lities,—and, by the dews of death, now
 “ hanging on my brow,—I beseech you,
 “ *love one another.*”

By your own eternal welfare be entreat-
 ed, Christians, to that charity, which
 Jesus thus feelingly recommends to your
 observance. By——But to what end does
 man preach, if God be disregarded.

Yet

Yet since the God of *kindness* is the God of justice too, let terror appal, if persuasion cannot bend you!—And know, that there is not a portion of his flock, that goeth astray by your uncharitableness, that will not be imputed to you for sin in the the day of retribution:—

Is there a wicked parent?—You are he. Is there an undutiful child?—You are he: Is there an unaffectionate brother?—You are he. Is there a cruel husband,—a faithless wife,—a disloyal subject,—a slanderer,—a robber,—a murderer,—*all these* characters doth the *uncharitable* sustain.—Not a sin, which the abandoned heart of man actuateth to the commission of, through your withholding your charity for the dispensation of God's word;—not a sin which you might have repelled, by giving your fellow creature that shield for his defence,—*not one*, that will not be accounted to you, in that dread moment, which decides your fate—for ever and for ever.

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If the very best of us will tremble before the judgement seat of God, how will that unhappy wretch meet the terrors of his trial, who adds the sins of his neighbour to his own criminality!—Thus doubly loaded, the frame of angels is shaken for his doom!—But, God of terrors! who can stand the thunders of thy voice, while thou pronouncest his tremendous sentence, “Depart, ye wicked into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.” O my dearest brethren, let me conjure you (while yet ye may) avoid a judgement so terrible,—such an *extremity* of woe.—A portion of that store, which heaven has provided you, will ensure you with his grace, a salvation from the gulf.—When power, and riches, and honour, with all this world’s goods shall be no more; and every human being shall appear, stripped of their distinctions, before the tribunal of the Almighty;—in *that instant*, had we millions, we would give them for a covering to our deformity, from the piercing eye

eye of God; and yet if we be unprepared for this meeting, the fault is *all our own*.—He has thrown his heavenly wardrobe open to our use, and we need but stretch our hands out, and we are cloathed.—Charity is the garment which Heaven doth delight in.—Charity which covereth a multitude of sins.—There is no one, that God hath not enabled to procure himself this robe.—The widow had it, *even* for a mite :—But here be not deceived,—it was not the meanness, but benevolence of her offering obtained her a prize of such enestimable worth. To whom much is given, from them much is assuredly expected.

Let it sink deep into your minds, and let your works manifest the reality of its penetration, that kneeling is not prayer, nor are uplifted eyes devotion.—“ It is not every one, that saith unto me, Lord, Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.”—And what the will of our heavenly Father is, *that* I have now declared to you. Do

Do you commit your whole fortunes to the mercy of the elements for a precarious return of perishable wealth, and will you not give *now* a tythe of what you would advance, upon the still more precarious adventure of a lottery, to secure, (for here is no chance, my brethren, *all* here is certainty) to secure, I say, not only *your own* unbounded welfare, but your *fellow creatures* too, world without end?—Give,—and look with confidence for your reward, when, to give, how wished soever, will be no longer in your power.

And now, Redeemer of the world, who reigneth with the Father in glory everlasting!—Pour down the influence of thy spirit upon this people, and like a whirlwind, tear up mammon by the roots,—then plant with blessed hand thy charity in its stead, and, teaching thy servants, who are this day filled with thy bread, to replenish, in like manner, the poor, that are without thy gate.—“ Make them wise,—that they
“may

“ may shine as the brightness of the firmament, and, having turned many to
“ righteousness, as the stars for evermore.”
—While Cherubim, and Seraphim in harmony of Heaven, hail with hallelujahs their translation to the skies !



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"may find the highest of the
"main, and, having turned round
"right about, as the day for evening."
—While Charming, and her ship in port
many of heaven, hall with hall
transition to the ideal

